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ABRAHAM LINCOLN. By Ellis P. Oberholtzer. *American Crisis Biographies*. Jacobs & Co., Philadelphia, 1905.

"To gain an impartial twentieth century view of the greatest event in the life of the Nation in the nineteenth century" is the praiseworthy intention prescribed for "The American Crisis Biographies," a new series, which will be edited by Dr. E. P. Oberholtzer, with the counsel and advice of Professor J. B. McMaster. In this series, southern men will write of southern men, and the lives of northern leaders will be told by those who to-day represent that section; but all, if the editor's wish prevails, will write from the standpoint of the present, with the smoke of battle cleared by the passage of half a century. While we may wonder at the choice of authors in some cases, the results, to say the least, will be awaited with interest.

The first volume to appear is the life of Abraham Lincoln, written by the editor of the series. Biographies of Lincoln have not been few, and the end is not yet. Perhaps the end will never be, for the sudden close of Lincoln's life leaves room for endless speculation upon the might-have-been.

Throughout Dr. Oberholtzer writes candidly of Lincoln's career, without either hero-worship or a desire to parade human faults. Lincoln's fatalism, his kindness, his self-depreciation, his political cleverness, his intrepidity in sticking to his principles and his use of very "practical" means to get what he wanted — these traits of the great President are clearly and simply told. The work does not pretend to great originality of scholarship. One omission seems to us unfortunate. Nothing is told of Lincoln's arbitrary extension of executive power in the case of Merriam, or of the consequent division between the President and Chief Justice Taney.

The style is usually clear and attractive; but one sentence at least, defies our attempts to comprehend it. We refer to this, which is found on page 16: "His wanton assassination at a time of public excitement raised up eulogists on every hand and years of groundless nonentity as an ex-president saved him from semi-oblivion and the possible detraction growing out of later movements, which sometimes neutralize the impression created by the most brilliant career."